

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled).
2. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 25 wherein said step of substituting ~~said source~~ the user terminal identification indicia with anonymous user terminal identification indicia comprises generating said anonymous user terminal identification indicia by using a character string and a portion of said ~~source~~ user terminal identification indicia in a mathematical hash algorithm.
3. (Amended) The method of Claim 2 wherein said step of generating said anonymous user terminal identification indicia is repeated each time a subsequent message from a particular ~~source~~ user terminal is received such that said anonymous user terminal identification indicia is consistent for each ~~source~~ user terminal .
4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 25 wherein the ~~cable system~~ television service provider network is operated by a cable operator entity and wherein said second message analysis is operated by a viewership analysis entity, and wherein said step of substituting said ~~source~~ user terminal identification indicia with anonymous the user terminal identification indicia is performed at a secure location where the viewership analysis entity cannot gain access.
5. (Original) The method of Claim 4 wherein the viewership analysis entity can gain access to said secure location only with assistance from the cable operator entity or an agent thereof.
6. (Original) The method of Claim 4 wherein the secure location comprises a computer that is password-protected and wherein the cable operator entity, or an agent thereof, does not have the password.
7. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 25 further comprising the step of inserting cable system source data into ~~said~~ a first decrypted message.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 7 wherein said source data comprises cable system network segment data.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 7 wherein said source data comprises cluster code data.

10. (Amended) The method of Claim 4 25 wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a set top box.

11. (Amended) The method of Claim 4 25 wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a cell phone.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 4 25 wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a personal digital assistant.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Amended) The system of Claim 13 26 wherein said ~~means for generating anonymous identification indicia~~ remote device comprises a computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for using a character string and a portion of said ~~source~~ user terminal identification indicia in a mathematical hash algorithm to generate said anonymous user terminal identification indicia.

15. (Amended) The system of Claim 14 wherein said ~~means for generating anonymous identification indicia~~ remote device repeats the use of said mathematical hash algorithm each time a subsequent message from a particular ~~source~~ user terminal is received such that said anonymous user terminal identification indicia is consistent for each ~~source~~ user terminal.

16. (Amended) The system of Claim 15 wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a set top box.

17. (Amended) The system of Claim 15 wherein the ~~source~~ user terminal comprises a memory chip that permits said ~~source~~ user terminal to receive the television programming content and wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a cell phone.

18. (Amended) The system of Claim 15 wherein the ~~source~~ user terminal comprises a memory chip that permits said ~~source~~ user terminal to receive the television programming content and wherein said ~~source~~ user terminal is a personal digital assistant.

19. (Amended) The system of Claim 13 ~~26~~ wherein the ~~cable-system~~ television service provider network is operated by a cable operator entity and wherein said message content processing is managed by a viewership analysis entity, said ~~server~~ remote device being positioned at a secure location where the viewership analysis entity cannot gain access.

20. (Original) The system of Claim 19 wherein said viewership analysis entity can gain access to said secure location only with assistance from the cable operator entity or agent thereof.

21. (Amended) The system of Claim 19 wherein said ~~means for generating anonymous identification indicia~~ remote device comprises a computer that is password-protected and wherein the cable operator entity does not have the password.

22. (Original) The system of Claim 15 further comprising means for inserting cable system source data into said first decrypted message.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 22 wherein said source data comprises cable system network segment data.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 22 wherein said source data comprises cluster code data.

25. (New) A method for anonymously transmitting user activity messages issued from a user terminal for analyzing the user activity message, the user terminal coupled to a television service provider network wherein the user terminal is configured to receive television programming content, said method comprising:

transmitting a user activity message to a remote device on the television system network, the user activity message including user activity data and user terminal identification indicia;

substituting the user terminal identification indicia with anonymous user terminal identification indicia that can be traced back to the user terminal identification indicia by the television service provider but can not be traced back to the user terminal identification indicia by a third party to form an anonymous user activity message; and

transmitting the anonymous user activity message to a third party location for analysis.

26. (New) A system for anonymously transmitting user activity messages for analyzing the user activity message, comprising:

a user terminal coupled to a television service provider network, wherein the user terminal is configured to receive television programming content from the television service provider network and to transmit a user activity message to the television service provider network, the user activity message including user activity data and user terminal identification indicia; and

a remote device coupled to the television service provider network, the remote device configured to receive the user activity message, substitute the user terminal identification indicia with anonymous user terminal identification indicia that can be traced back to the user terminal identification indicia by the television service provider but can not be traced back to the user terminal identification indicia by a third party to form an anonymous user activity message and transmit the anonymous user activity message to a third party location for analysis.